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ABSTRACT

This article deals with two ideas that are of special interest to adult continuing educators. The first innovation is the continuing education unit (CEU), which is a means for providing a uniform measure of recognition to the adult non-credit student. A CEU represents ten contact hours of participation in a continuing education non-credit learning experience under responsible sponsorship, and qualified instruction. Current views on the uses of the CEU, as well as its strengths and weaknesses, are documented. The "You Can" Program is an innovative approach to developing a national image or identity for adult continuing education. Some of the expected results of the "You Can" concept are an elimination of the fragmentation of effort that often occurs in individual community programs, and a sense of cooperation among all continuing education groups. (AH)

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THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT (CEU) AND "YOU CAN":

TWO INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATORS

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THE CONTINUING EDUCATION UNIT (CEU) AND "YOU CAN": TWO INNOVATIVE IDEAS FOR CONTINUING EDUCATORS

The objective of this article is to stimulate you to consider two practical innovative ideas that you, as an adult continuing educator, can implement and experiment with.

The Continuing Education Unit (CEU)

Non-credit subjects are fast becoming the most suitable form of education for thousands of Canadians who, each year, decide to continue their education in an extension or continuing education program. A problem exists because Canadian continuing educators are not using a uniform measure to give recognition to the adult non-credit student who takes one or more non-credit subjects. At Canadore College I have met the challenge of recognition for these students through the introduction and use of the continuing education unit (CEU).[1]

What Is The Continuing Education Unit (CEU)?

The CEU is a method of recording and accounting for an individual's participation in non-credit subjects and seminars. A CEU represents ten contact hours of participation in a continuing education non-credit learning experience under responsible sponsorship, capable direction, and qualified instruction.[2]

[1] See 1974 Catalogs of the Canadore Continuing Education Division - available from the author.

[2] "Administrators Swap Shop", NAPCAE, Washington, Vol. XXI, No. 1, October 1974.

The CEU was developed in the United States in 1968 when thirty-four national organizations sent representatives to a national planning conference. The participants wished to establish a uniform measurement unit for non-credit subjects and a task force was established. The CEU was developed by the task force.

The CEU has been widely adopted by continuing education agencies in the United States and the results are encouraging. A large body of knowledge about the CEU and its use is available and I encourage you to read the items mentioned in the bibliography of this article.

In Ontario we have twenty-two colleges of applied arts and technology and as yet there is no uniform method for recording non-credit learning experiences. We need the CEU to reduce the confusion, fragmentation and loss of recognition that occurs when such a measurement and recognition system is not in use.

Non-credit subjects are in every way as important and valuable as credit subjects and we need new ways to recognize and reward students in these areas. Continuing education is lifelong-learning and students need a method to record the accumulation of all of their learning experiences, both credit and non-credit, throughout their entire life span. The unit used to accumulate non-credit learning experiences must be flexible since it must cover many learning experiences that take place outside of schools in industry and in the community. In many cases today the community is our classroom.

A system of measurement and recognition for non-credit learning experiences must be universally adopted by all continuing educators to enable a student to transfer his non-credit record from place to place and update it throughout his entire life.

The Continuing Education Unit is best described in the following excerpts from the administrative guidelines developed by the National Task Force on the Development of a Uniform Unit of Measurement for Non-credit Continuing Education:

Criteria for awarding CEUs

- The non-credit activity must be the result of an assessment of educational needs for a specific target population.
- There must be a statement of objectives and rationale for the activity.
- Content is selected and organized in a sequential manner.
- There is evidence of pre-planning. This should include input from a representative of the target group to be served, from the faculty members having content expertise, and from continuing education personnel.
- The activity must be instructional, and it must be sponsored or approved by an academic or administrative unit of the school--the unit best qualified to affect the quality of the course content, and to approve the resource persons to be used.
- Participants must be registered in the program in order to provide data for school records and reporting.
- Appropriate evaluation methods must be used, and evaluation criteria must be established (before the beginning of the activity) for awarding CEUs to the students. This may include evaluation of student performance, instructional procedures, and course effectiveness.

The National Task Force developed the following administrative requirements:

1. A high level individual within the continuing education operation of the institution should certify and approve the awarding of a specific number of Continuing Education Units for a program prior to the program offering.

2. The Program Director for each learning experience should be responsible for certifying that the program was attended and completed by individuals who request CEUs.

3. The institution is responsible for establishing and maintaining permanent records of Continuing Education Units awarded. It is suggested by the Task Force that the information to be recorded on each individual record include at least--

The student's name
The student's social security number
Title of the course
Course description and comparative level
Starting and ending dates of the course
Program format
Number of Continuing Education Units awarded

It is also considered highly desirable that the permanent record include:

Evaluation of the student's performance
Name of the instructor and course director
Personal information about the student: address, birth date, educational background, employment, etc.
Any cooperating sponsors, company, associations, government agencies, etc.
Course classifications; i.e., professional liberal education, vocational, technical, etc.

Some administrative benefits stated in a recent National Association for Public Continuing and Adult Education (NAPCAE) article are:

1. It can provide effective internal coordination and accounting of all non-credit courses, classes and programs.

2. It can give you a realistic base for budget and funding formulas for non-credit educational activities.

3. It can provide a base for measuring faculty and staff participation in non-credit educational activities--both administrative and teaching loads.

4. It can serve as a reliable measure of resource use--such as space and equipment for non-credit activities.

5. Combined with records of credit activities, it can give you an accurate analysis of your program's total progress toward meeting its goals.[3]

[3] Ibid.

William Turner, Chairman of the National Task Force on the Development of a Uniform Unit of Measurement for Non-credit Continuing Education has outlined the following possible benefits to implementors of the CEU.

1. It will systematize the recording and reporting system for participation in non-credit continuing education.
2. It will provide a uniform system for accumulating quantitative data on participation in continuing education activities.
3. It will permit the accumulation, updating and transfer of the continuing education record of an individual participant.
4. It will encourage long-range educational goals and lifelong learning as a process of continuing education.
5. It will make the pursuit of knowledge more attractive as a way of personal and professional development.
6. It will permit and encourage the typical adult student to marshall and utilize a host of continuing education resources to serve his particular needs.[4]

Grover J. Andrews of the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools lists the following strengths and weaknesses of the CEU.

The Continuing Education Unit has some obvious strengths, such as:

- the benefits it can offer to the adult student in providing the mechanism for accurately recording and accumulating non-credit educational activities;
- the qualitative effect it can have upon the developmental process for flexible non-credit programs within an institution;
- the institutional benefits for measuring total institutional educational effort resulting in institutional recognition, program funding, and personnel credit for effort expended;
- the fact that it can be the means of providing for a national unification of adult, continuing, and extension education courses, programs, and activities through the recognition, acceptance, and use of the unit.
- the CEU can become the primary unit for professional organizational use in certification and re-licensing once an individual has achieved the basic credit-hour educational requirements of the profession.

[4] Rowray, Richard D. and Turner, William L. and Lynch, Walter J. "The Continuing Education Unit (CEU) of Measure in Review". College and University, Vol. 48. No. 4, 1974.

> The CEU is not without some areas of weakness. The major limitations of the unit appear to be as follows:
>
> - in its use merely as a quantifying unit for records and institution accounting;
>
> - in an inconsistent use of the CEU by all institutional and organizational users both in the course or program construction aspects and the record keeping requirements;
>
> - in a narrow interpretation of the "contact hour" component of the definition.
>
> For successful use of the CEU the qualitative as well as quantitative elements must be equally recognized and developed. ....It must be recognized that the CEU is a flexible unit which can be applied to many types of programs in various modes of delivery including independent study and nontraditional forms.[5]

The strengths and weaknesses of the CEU are further discussed in an article by Huey B. Long. Long concludes that, "only through the flexibility concept of the CEU can one understand the movement toward more non-traditional learning experiences among higher education while developing the CEU at the same time."[6]

I submit that Canadian continuing educators must begin to discuss the CEU as a possible international unit for non-credit continuing education learning experiences. Canadian adult and continuing educators should, through an association such as the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE), form a National Committee to consider the implications of the CEU for Canadian education. We can help to make the CEU an international unit. We can participate in further development of the CEU.

[5] Andrews, Grover J., "The Continuing Education Unit: A New Kind of Credit for Higher Education Continuing Education". Paper presented to the Summer Seminar on Academic Administration Baylor University, Waco, Texas, July 9, 1974.

[6] Long, Huey B. "Perspectives of The Continuing Education Unit", Adult Leadership, Vol. 22, No. 8, 1974.

Dr. John Rhodes has completed a study on the future utilization of the CEU. I will close this section on the CEU with Dr. Rhodes' conclusions concerning the utilization of the CEU by 1980.

1. That a majority of accredited colleges and universities will be awarding C.E.U.'s and maintaining permanent records for program participants who have earned units.

2. That the quality of continuing education programs will improve because of the criteria set by regional accrediting agencies that must be met before C.E.U.'s are awarded.

3. The C.E.U. records will be maintained by the registrars of institutions.

4. That the C.E.U. will be used to measure faculty work load and participation in continuing education.

5. That faculty members will assume more responsibility for attendance records and evaluation procedures for students in CEU programs.

6. That CEU activities will have a greater share of public fund support for higher education and that this increased funding will increase the competitive struggle for funds within institutions of higher education.

7. That state appropriated budgets for continuing education will be based on the full-time equivalent student enrollment in continuing education programs.

8. That financial support for continuing education from business and professional societies will increase because of the CEU.

9. That the CEU will become the basis for updating and re-licensing members of the major professional organizations.

10. That because of the CEU institutions of higher education will be able to serve the continuing education needs of industry and government better and, therefore, the number of contracts for non-credit education will increase.[7]

[7] Rhodes, John A. Jr., "Future Utilization of the Continuing Education Unit in Conferences, Institutes, Short Courses, Workshops, Seminars, and Special Training Programs within the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools", Southern Association of Colleges and Schools, Atlanta, 1974.

The "You Can" Program

"You Can" is an innovative approach to developing a uniform national image or identity for adult continuing education.[8]

The "You Can" Program is based upon the "You Can" logo (see Figure 1) which combines "the little red school house" and the positive phrase YOU CAN. This logo when adopted by many continuing education agencies, provides a common identity for continuing adult education.

John Colbert, Director of Adult Basic Education, Pontiac Schools, says, "Education is a lifelong process - in order to cooperatively work toward this goal in every community... it seems almost a necessity to have developed a unity in the image of what Adult and Community Education stands for".

In Canada we have not attempted to develop a national image for adult education and we have really done little to foster a common image in approaching the public. We are just beginning to hear the drummer in regard to the community school. We do little primary advertising for adult education.

We are ready for "You Can"![9]

[8] See Canadore Continuing Education Division current catalogs and promotion material.

[9] See "You Can" Promotion Guideline - R.A. Dinkel Co., Lansing, Michigan, and NAPCAE "You Can" Committee, 1201 Sixteenth St. N.E. Washington, D.C. 20036.

The Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. (AEA) Community College Section recently reported:

> "A recurrent and continuing problem with Community Colleges and other adult and continuing education agencies is that of duplication of educational services, and the competition for students at the various institutions. Many states have mandated that coordinating councils be established to integrate and coordinate the efforts of various agencies servicing adults in an effort to avoid duplication of services. However, these councils often serve as "spy sessions" wherein each agency attempts to get the jump on the others with innovative programs, motivated by the instinct for self-preservation, thus exacerbating the difficulty of coordination between agencies. Specific delineation of areas of responsibility is still necessary."[10]

The "You Can" idea could provide a beginning vehicle for all continuing education agencies to share. It might help to eliminate the fragmentation of effort that often occurs in individual communities.

A national (perhaps international) identity for continuing education with a corporate symbol would foster cooperation among all continuing education groups in the country.

At Canadore I have implemented the "You Can" idea and symbol and am experimenting with its various uses, especially its use in a situation where the college's logo, promotional guidelines, and official documents were developed by an outside consultant. Perhaps "You Can" can help us in uniting our continuing education marketing efforts. I suggest that we have a second task for an organization such as the Canadian Association for Adult Education (CAAE). A committee should be formed at this level to work closely with the "You Can" committee of the National Association for Public and Continuing Education (NAPCAE) and the Adult Education Association of the U.S.A. (AEA).

[10] Adult and Continuing Education Today, Washington D.C. Vol IV, No. 24, November 1974.

Many U.S. Colleges are working with the CEU and "You Can". At Canadore I have begun to use and test these processes and ideas.

We need a national or international non-credit measurement policy and process. We need a national or international identity for adult continuing education. The CEU and "You Can" are two approaches, two possible solutions to the problems. I challenge you to contribute to the solution of these problems.

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CLEARINGHOUSE FOR
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FIGURE 1